

BOOK REVIEWS

GLACIAL ANALYSIS: AN INTERACTIVE INTRODUCTION by J. K. Hart and K. Martinez, Routledge, London, 1997. CD-ROM. single user licence £39.95 (\$50) + VAT. ISBN 0-415-15971 7.

Glacial Analysis is a CD-ROM based package for PC or Mac aimed at introductory level glacial geology students. It is probably best suited for first or second year physical geography or environmental science students in UK universities or their equivalent. The CD contains material equivalent to perhaps six hours of introductory lectures and four hours of practicals covering introductory glaciology, glacial geology, geomorphology and sedimentology with an emphasis on sedimentary techniques.

The CD presents a sequence of linked screens together with a contents screen. The screens can be followed logically or can be accessed in any order, and can be searched for keywords. Additional interaction is provided by an edit facility which allows the copying of text, but not, as far as I could find out, figures to a clipboard-like facility. The promised Internet linkage was disappointing, as it currently links only to the Routledge page advertising the CD. Occasional quiz questions are provided to allow 'readers' to assess their progress.

Almost every screen in the package is presented with either a diagram, photograph, animation or video clip. The picture-to-word ratio is thus considerably higher than in a standard text book. The standard of the visual material varies, some is rather pixelly, some excellent. All are in colour, although only one has an audio track.

The CD covers: introduction to the glacial environment;

introduction to the techniques; till fabric; folds and faults; and till type summary. There are also a number of exercises, a bibliography and a glossary. The CD is attractively packaged with a booklet ('user's guide'). The first section, 'Introduction to the glacial environment', covers a very wide range of material. In this section some of the material seemed to me oddly organized. For example, glacier hydrology is covered in a subsection entitled, 'Glaciofluvial deposition'. Presumably because the material has had to be trimmed to fit onto the CD, this section presented very much the 'soft bed' school of glacial geology, and is, in my opinion, somewhat idiosyncratic. The second section, 'Introduction to the techniques', was my favourite, covering broadly most techniques used in glacial geology. I felt that the material was as close to a virtual field trip as one could hope for, and introduced many of the ideas more successfully than lectures or written material.

The biggest problems with using the CD for teaching may well be practical. Its use with a class requires a cluster of machines with CD drives, certainly a rarity in my university! There are a sprinkling of typos, many of which appear to be associated with special characters such as 'ö', rather disappointing in a package with so many examples from Iceland and Svalbard.

Subject to the caveats presented I think the CD could be used successfully as part of an undergraduate first or second year course in glacial geomorphology/geology. The approach is innovative and especially appropriate to the techniques orientated contents.

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ARID ZONE GEOMORPHOLOGY: PROCESS, FORM AND CHANGE IN DRYLANDS 2nd Edition, edited by David S. G. Thomas, John Wiley and Sons, Chichester, 1997. No. of pages: 713. Price: £55.00 (hb). ISBN 0-471-97160-X; 0-471-97610-5.

We now have a choice of three tomes on desert geomorphology, all from the 1990s. In order of publication, and as it happens, of size, they are: *Desert Geomorphology*, by Cooke, Warren and Goudie (1993, 502 pages); *Geomorphology of Desert Environments*, edited by Abrahams and Parsons (1994, 674 pages); and the edited one being reviewed here (713 pages). By at least three criteria,

this volume is the clear winner. It is: (a) the biggest; (b) the most recently published; and (c) bucking the trend, it is the cheapest.

Most potential buyers will be more discriminating, and they will be happy to find that this book also passes more demanding tests. They will find authority, for, as in the first edition, this can again claim to be written by many of the leaders in the field. Most are publishing actively in the topics about which they write: the figures for self-quotation range from 0 to 16 per cent, with a median of about 5 per cent (first-author papers as percentage of those listed in each chapter). Where Abrahams and Parsons had a North American bias among their contributors, David Thomas has a British one, with even a strong slant to Sheffield (close to the driest place in England, it must be said), but they are on the whole, no less